

תַּלְמִידֵי יֵשׁוּעַ

Yeshua's Disciples

After Yeshua was tempted in the wilderness, and went from village to village, and town to town proclaiming the Good News of God's love for Israel, His chosen people, and calling the people to repent of their sinful ways and to return in obedience to their God. As He began His teaching, He invited twelve men to become His disciples. A disciple is called a *Talmid* (תַּלְמִיד) in Hebrew, a word that means "a student," and describes someone who spends time with a teacher in order to follow the teacher's manner of life and instructions. A *talmid* also tells others what he or she has learned, and tries to encourage others to become disciples of the teacher.



As Yeshua was visiting the villages and towns of Israel, one day He saw two brothers fishing. Their names were Shimon (who was also called Peter) and Andrew. As they were casting their nets into the water to catch fish, Yeshua said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." In the same way that the Shimon and Andrew were trying to gather in fish by throwing out their fishing nets, so they would gather in people by proclaiming the Good News of salvation. When Shimon and Andrew heard Yeshua's call to them, they left their fishing business and became *talmidim* of Yeshua. A little while later Yeshua came upon two more brothers who were fishermen, Jacob (Yaacov) and John (Yochanan), the sons of Zebedee. Yeshua invited them to be His *talmidim* as well, and like Shimon and Andrew, they left their fishing nets and followed after Yeshua.

Eventually, Yeshua invited eight other men to become His *talmidim*, making twelve in all. Counting Yeshua Himself, this made thirteen, which corresponds to the number of the tribes of Israel, and was an illustration that Yeshua was calling all of Israel to return to a genuine faith and obedience in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The rest of the names of the *talmidim* were (cf. Matthew 10:2–4): Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James (Yaacov) the son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Shimon (the Zealot), Judah (Judas) Iscariot. Except for Judas Iscariot, who denied Yeshua and forsook Him, all of the other *talmidim* continued to follow Him faithfully, and to proclaim the Good News of the kingdom.

Before Yeshua ascended to the Father, He instructed His *talmidim* to go to all of the world to make more *talmidim* among the Gentiles. He told them to teach the people everything that He had taught them, and to bring all those who would receive the message of the Gospel by faith into the covenant people of Israel. We know that His *talmidim* obeyed their Master's instructions, because in the years following Yeshua's ascension, the Gospel spread throughout the known world, and many thousands of people came to confess Yeshua as the true Messiah, and to become His disciples.

Today, Yeshua is still calling us to be His *talmidim*. This means that we are to learn what He taught, and to live the way He lived. He calls each one of us, through the message of the Good News, to "walk in His footsteps," and to tell others the Good News that God has made a way of salvation from sin.